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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a plan for assessing academic and social growth of special education students. The targeted population consisted of six elementary students with hearing impairments and seven high school students with mental impairments. The problems of assessing special education students were documented through data collected from teacher observations and evaluations, student records and collected work samples, and input from support staff. An analysis of the probable cause data indicated that there are insufficient testing materials available to address the individual needs of the targeted population. In addition, data indicated that norm referred standardized tests do not accurately assess this population. Solution strategies suggested in current literature, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the selection of interventions. These interventions included developing authentic assessment tools and establishing working portfolios to assess educational and social growth and development. Post intervention data indicated an increase in academic and social growth. Tangible evidence of this was apparent in students' portfolios. Students took ownership in their learning and discovered alternate methods to assess their achievements, resulting in a higher self-esteem and a more comprehensive understanding of each student's uniqueness. (Contains 34 references.) (Author/CR)

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ASSESSING SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC SKILLS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS USING AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENTS

Wendy M. Jensen
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This project was approved by

Advisor

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Dean, School of Education

Dedication

This action research is dedicated to Freedah and Ma. Their esoteric blend of humor, dedication, and friendship has made this research possible. They are indeed two memorable individuals. They have provided the very fiber from which this research evolved. We will be forever grateful to them.

ABSTRACT

This paper describes a plan for assessing academic and social growth of special education students. The targeted population consisted of intermediate students with hearing impairments and high school students with mental impairments in two separate middle class suburbs of a large midwestern city. The problems of assessing special education students were documented through data collected from teacher observations and evaluations, student records and collected work samples, and input from support staff.

An analysis of the probable cause data indicated that there are insufficient testing materials available to address the individual needs of the targeted population. In addition, data indicated that norm referenced standardized tests do not accurately assess this population.

Solution strategies suggested in current literature, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the selection of interventions. These interventions included development of authentic assessment tools and establishment of working portfolios to assess educational and social growth and development.

Post intervention data indicated an increase in academic and social growth. Tangible evidence of this was apparent in student portfolios. Students took ownership in their learning and discovered alternate methods to assess their achievements. This resulted in higher self-esteem and a more comprehensive understanding of the uniqueness of each student who has special needs.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 – PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT 1

General Statement of the Problem 1

Immediate Problem Context 1

The Surrounding Community 7

National Context of the Problem 8

CHAPTER 2- PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION 11

Problem Evidence 11

Probable Causes within School Sites 20

Probable Cause Literature Review 20

CHAPTER 3 – THE SOLUTION STRATEGY 25

Literature Review 25

Project Objectives and Processes 30

Project Action Plan 30

Methods of Assessment 32

CHAPTER 4 – Project Results 33

Historical Description of the Intervention 33

Presentation and Analysis of Results 37

Conclusions and Recommendations 39

REFERENCES 43

APPENDICES 46

Appendix A – Survey on Adaptive Skills 47

Appendix B – Tally Sheet for Adaptive Skills Survey 48

Appendix C – Mean Scores for Adaptive Sills Survey 49

Appendix D – Survey on Social Skills and Pragmatics 50

Appendix E – Tally Sheet for Social Skills Survey 51

Appendix F – Mean Scores for Social Skills Survey 53

Appendix G – Student Interview Questions 55

Appendix H – Biographical Poem 56

Appendix I – Student Test Survey 57

Appendix J – Test Survey Tally Sheet 58

Appendix K – Parent Letters 59

Appendix L – Student Conference Log 61

Appendix M – Rubrics 62

Appendix N – Teacher Observation Log 64

Appendix O – Portfolio Conferencing 65

Appendix P – Intervention Rubric 66

Appendix Q – Individual Goals 67

Appendix R – Two Stars and a Wish 68

Appendix S – Post Test Survey Tally Sheet 69

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of Problem

The educational growth and achievement of the targeted special education students at the targeted schools are not adequately assessed using standard methods. This is evidenced by poor test scores, student inability to understand testing and the lack of appropriate methods of assessment for this population. There is a need to accurately evaluate educational growth.

IMMEDIATE PROBLEM CONTEXT

Two special education teachers are conducting this action research. The research is being done at two schools that are in two separate school districts. The schools will be identified as Site A and Site B and the teachers as Researcher A and Researcher B.

School – Site A:

Site A is an eighty-acre campus in a suburb of a large midwestern city. The three-story brick high school building opened in 1959. The structure houses classrooms, shops, science, computer and reading labs, a library/media center, a large auditorium, multipurpose room, cafeteria, and district offices. One of the newer developments is an Instructional Resource Center. This center is staffed by teachers and is equipped with computers. Help is available for students before, during, and after school hours. Technology access is available to support education throughout the school. Access includes the internet and a district network. Physical

education and athletic facilities include three gymnasiums, a fitness center, athletic fields, a lighted stadium, tennis courts, and running tracks.

Students have access to a wide curriculum selection including Tech Prep that provides flexible learning and career training. Forty-three co-curricular clubs and activities are available to students. The art students give the building a continual change of decor by painting murals above the lockers in all of the halls. Students for a Better Environment promote waste recycling. The drama department puts on three stage plays per year.

Statistics from the 1997 School Report Card indicate that Site A has a total enrollment of 1,858 students. The ethnic profile of Site A is as follows: 84.2% White, 7.2% Hispanic, 5.2% Asian, 3% Black and 0.5% Native American. Eight and nine tenths percent of students are classified as low-income. This is significantly below the state average of 35.7%. The number of students classified as Limited-English-Proficient is low at 3.9%. The dropout rate is 4.8%, attendance is 93.0% and student mobility is 13.0%. Chronic truancy is 0.9% and the number of chronic truants is 16. Site A has an average class size of 20.8 students which is computed for the whole school based on average class sizes for the second and fifth periods.

Site A has an administration team that consists of one principal, three assistant principals, and an athletic director., The total number on the faculty roster is 147. This figure includes administration, three deans, seven counselors, one nurse, two psychologists, one social worker, one speech pathologist and one special education vocational coordinator. There are 126 teachers who teach during one or more class periods. Some staff members service both high schools in the district. The clerical staff has 21 full time employees. There are five technical assistants and 23 teacher aides. The halls and cafeteria are monitored by 10 student supervisors. The building and grounds employs 22 staff. The cafeterias for students and faculty have a staff of 12 employees.

The racial background of the faculty is not as diverse as the students. The faculty is 98.2% White, 0.9% is Hispanic, and Black and Asian are both at 0.5%. The average teaching experience within Site A is 17 years. Advanced education is strongly encouraged and financially

supported by the district with 73.2% of teachers having Master's and above. Teachers are given a specific length of time to receive a Master's degree in order to keep advancing on the salary scale.

Site A has special needs classes that are part of two separate cooperatives. There is one self-contained class for students with moderate mental impairments. These students share common lunch periods with general education students. They also have student peer partners in their physical education class. There is some mainstreaming with these students. Accompanied by a teacher's aide, a few of these students attend woods, art, and child care classes. Staff within this moderately mentally impaired class are employees of the cooperative. These students also receive services from building staff and specialists hired by the cooperative. A separate cooperative supervises a vision resource room at Site A. Because of the low incidence of this disability, the visually impaired students come from a much larger geographic area.

The school has other special needs classes. There is a class for students with mild mental impairments. The focus of this program is life skills with major emphasis on transition. Other special needs classes include classes for learning disabled, classes for behavior disordered, and resource rooms for these students. District faculty as well as itinerant specialists from the cooperatives service these special needs students.

School - Site B:

Site B is located in a smaller suburb farther north and west of Site A. It is an elementary building situated in a quiet neighborhood setting. It was built in 1958 and presently has 386 students enrolled. Site B has recently undergone substantial retrofitting by the district (1996-97). Improvements include new heating and air conditioning, updated electrical throughout the building, a new clock/bell/intercom system, asbestos abatement in two classrooms and the gym, a new gym floor, a resurfaced parking lot, and improvements to the existing library. Other improvements made to each classroom were carpeting, painting, new sinks with drinking fountains, new windows, and televisions with VCR's. In addition to improvements a large multi-purpose room, an additional classroom and two itinerant rooms were added to the school.

This site also has technology access through their new 30-station computer lab, which has internet and a district wide network. Site B recently went through the Quality Review process with the state (January 1998).

Statistics from the 1997 School Report Card show the student population of Site B is racially and economically diverse consisting of 63.0% Whites, 28.2% Hispanics, 6.0% African-American, and 2.8% Asian/Pacific Islander. Nearly one fourth, 24.6%, of Site B's students have been classified as Limited-English-Proficient or Bilingual. This is 5.1% higher than the district norm. Close to one third, 31.3%, of the students are considered to be of low-income which is 3.7% higher than district norm. Site B has an attendance rate of 96.5% with a chronic truancy rate of 0.0%. Individual student mobility rate within the school's attendance boundaries is 11.7%. The average class size is 21.8 students with the state's average at 23.4. The student's are grouped homogeneously according to age and heterogeneously within the classroom. They receive instruction in art, music, physical education, library and computer lab once a week.

Site B's administration consists of one principal, and a support staff of 15 which includes an office secretary, a clerical aide, a bilingual liaison, one full time day custodian, one full time night custodian and lunch room supervisors. The faculty includes 12 general education classroom teachers, three primary bilingual education classroom teachers with two bilingual classroom aids, two special education classroom teachers, one special education aide, one speech and language pathologist, one part time learning disabilities specialist, one part time social worker, one librarian, one part time nurse, and four itinerant specialists for art, music and physical education.

The hearing impaired classroom in this study from Site B also receives support services from a regional cooperative. The district contracts with the cooperative to supervise the program. They also provide a counselor trained to work with students who are hearing impaired for a weekly group counseling session as well as individual counseling services for those students in need. In addition, a certified audiologist visits the classroom weekly to check on equipment and manages any problems that may have occurred for the teacher or students. The

students may have a free hearing evaluation annually at one of two offices run by the cooperative. They are also provided with a Phonic Ear hearing aid system by the cooperative, which is used in the classroom and in the mainstream classes.

Students for this program are bussed in from surrounding communities because there is a low-incidence of hearing impairment. None of the current students reside within Site B's attendance boundaries. Students are mainstreamed and serviced by the general education teachers for art, music, physical education and any academic class when it is appropriate for them. Although the program's philosophy is total communication and sign language is used in their classroom, mainstreamed students do not have interpreters available for them unless it is listed in their individual educational program (IEP). The hearing impaired program consists of primary and intermediate self-contained classrooms that have been housed in Site B since 1982. This study is targeting the intermediate students.

District - Site A:

Site A is in a district comprised of two large high schools. Seven miles separate the schools. They are each located in different towns. The second school has much different demographics. Students are more ethnically diverse. The percentage of low-income and Limited-English-Proficient students are higher than the state average. The superintendent in charge of the total enrollment of 3,641 is listed in the newspaper (Daily Herald, January 21, 1998, Source, State Board of Education) as number 20 in the list of the state's highest paid superintendents. The salary is listed as $141,241. The School Report Card for 1997 reports the average administrator's salary as $93,584 and average teacher's salary as $61,414. The superintendent has two assistants, four directors and a support staff of eighteen. The district has established a set of standards for both schools. Operating expenditure per student is $9,507, which is higher than the state average of $6,158. Staff development includes an internal university, collegial coaching, information-exchange sessions, opportunities to attend conferences, as well as tuition reimbursement making it a very progressive district.

The district has a vision statement: "We envision that District ## will be a safe, trusting and collaborative environment that develops lifelong, self-directed learners. We believe that all students can learn and achieve success in a technologically advanced global society. Since education is a dynamic process, we provide a structure which responds to change." The Mission statement is: "The District Learning Community will ensure that all graduates will have the skills and knowledge to achieve success in a changing society" (Site A Registration Guide 1998-99).

District - Site B:

Site B's community has seven other elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school which all belong to a large area school district. This school district is the second largest in the state. It is a unit school district which has 31,650 students enrolled. The unit school district covers 90 square miles. It encompasses five surrounding communities and parts of four other communities. The unit district consists of four high schools, seven middle schools, and thirty-seven elementary buildings.

According to the School Report Card the ethnic profile of the district is as follows: 60.8% White, 25.0% Hispanic, 8.0% Black, 6.1% Asian/Pacific Islanders, and 0.1% Native Americans. The district lists attendance rate at 94.9%, student mobility rate at 22.7% and chronic truancy at 1.3%. Low-income is 27.6% and Limited-English-Proficient students is 19.5% making the district diverse. Student population is ever growing in this unit district. The district has built a new high school and four new elementary buildings with money from a 1994 referendum. Two elementary buildings are being built because the growth in this district averages 800 students each year. They are scheduled to open in the fall of 1998. In addition to new buildings, all existing schools were expanded and/or retrofitted to be brought up-to-date.

The 1997 School Report Card states the teachers in the district are 89.3% White, 7.3% Hispanic, 2.4% Black, 0.8% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.1% Native American. Of the 1,685 teachers, 76.7% are female and 23.3% are male. The average teaching experience in the district is 15.8 years with 53.6% holding degrees of Master's and above. The majority of teachers in

Site B have 20 plus years experience, have been teaching together in the same building for that time and hold their Master's plus 40. The average pupil expenditure in the district is $5,558 compared to the state's expenditure of $6,158 per pupil. The superintendent's salary is $131,000. The average administrator's salary is $73,715 and the average teacher salary is $45,477.

The Surrounding Community - Site A:

The community of Site A was incorporated in 1917. The school is located in a 4.5 square mile community with a population of 22,279 according to a 1993 revision of the 1990 census. The average median home value is $127,819. The majority of homes, 75.3%, are owner occupied. The average household income is $55,206 with income below $15,000 at 8.8%. This community houses primarily blue-collar workers. Professionals account for 26.3% of the residents' occupations. The ethnic profile of the community is 89.9% White, 5.4% Hispanic, 3.5% other and 1.2% Black. Children attend school in three elementary school districts, one high school district, and three private schools. The community houses a library and sixteen places of worship. Parks, schools with play yards and a golf course provide recreational opportunities for residents. Business and industry are present in the community on a small scale. There are several strip malls, numerous restaurants, and small manufacturers. A large exposition hall houses a variety of events.

Surrounding Community- Site B:

Site B is located approximately 30 miles northwest of a large metropolitan city. The village covers 6.85 square miles and was incorporated in 1957. According to a special census done in 1995, Site B's town is home to 33,705 people. The community is 80.8% White with 9.7% Hispanic, 6% Asian/Pacific Islander, 2.8% Black, and .4% American Indian also residing there. The community is mostly residential in the middle to low income range. Median family income is $50,301 with 1.7% being below poverty level. The majority, 88.9%, of the people are homeowners, 82.6% are employed, and 83.4% have obtained at least a high school diploma. The

Chamber of Commerce states the community is home to eight churches, a public library, park district and 46 clubs and organizations. This community has its own fire and police protection agencies as well as 500 commercial and industrial businesses.

NATIONAL CONTEXT OF THE PROBLEM

Assessment of special education students is essential not only for showing growth but also for determining eligibility and instructional planning and programming. "Instructional planning uses assessment data to make the intervention more relevant to the student's educational needs" (Hughes, 1993, p.28).

Pike and Salend (1995) agree that special needs students have a need for assessment that will enable educators to make important decisions regarding a student's educational program. They feel decisions can include determining related services, specifying objectives of a student's educational program, identifying potential instructional strategies as well as evaluating the effectiveness of the program.

According to Wesson and King (1996), new ideas for assessment in general are emerging in education. Special educators need to keep themselves informed of new assessment practices. John W. Dougherty (1994), feels that having "inclusive education for students with disabilities brings special education directly into the mainstream of discussions regarding educational reform" (p.7). Assessment systems that have valid and reliable information about what all students know and what they can do with the information is of highest importance.

Criticism of assessments for students with special needs is great. "These criticisms include bias in testing, minority, and ethnic disproportion, excessive reliance on standardized measurement instruments, the exclusion of regular educators from the decision-making process, and the negative effects of labeling" (Hughes, 1993, p.29). Hughes further states that measuring what students with special needs have learned is difficult. It is compounded by the poor test-taking skills and ineffective learning strategies these students display. Most tests are

standardized, test a small number of skills and frequently use multiple-choice format. Tests do not reflect students' organizational skills or their strategies for solving problems.

Pike and Salend (1995), also feel that "the exclusive use of norm-referenced standardized tests in making instructional decisions has limitations" (p.19). They state there is a changing philosophy toward learning and learners, a focus on students' abilities not disabilities. Wesson and King (1996), agree assessment should include instructional "opportunities for students to work on real and functional projects that have legitimacy beyond the immediate classroom" (p.44).

There is dissatisfaction with assessment practices in major curriculum areas. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) calls for broadening techniques and also for teachers to broaden their understanding of the different purposes of assessment. The International Reading Association advocates a change to more authentic measures of assessment. These measures should reflect models and theories of curriculum content and cognitive processes (Hughes, 1993).

Travis (1996), states that standardized evaluation of students has knowledge and skills being the criteria measured. In fact knowledge and skills in the classroom are not well represented in most standardized tests, which rely chiefly on lower cognitive skills. He feels that students should be assessed in attitude and behavior. These criteria are not addressed in standardized tests.

Many educators frequently teach students the test material itself. Students may learn enough to pass the test without actually acquiring the skills. Many see standardized tests as essentially biased. "Presuming that each student has unique experiences, background and learning styles, no single instrument could realistically be sufficient to measure such individual development" (Travis, 1996, p.308). As cited by Travis (1996) and Wiggin's (1989) medical analogy, comparing traditional testing to the pulse rate as a measure of a person's total health, is applicable to special needs assessments. "As long as we use traditional tests, we will have incomplete measurement" (Travis, 1996, p.309).

In conclusion, it is evident that assessment in relation to the special needs student is less than adequate. Assessment in education is undergoing a process of reexamination. New trends and developments need to be evaluated.

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

In order to document that the targeted special education students at Site A and B are not adequately assessed, data was collected at both sites. This data was in the form of student, teacher, and parent surveys, anecdotal records, interviews, previous test scores from student records and samples of student work.

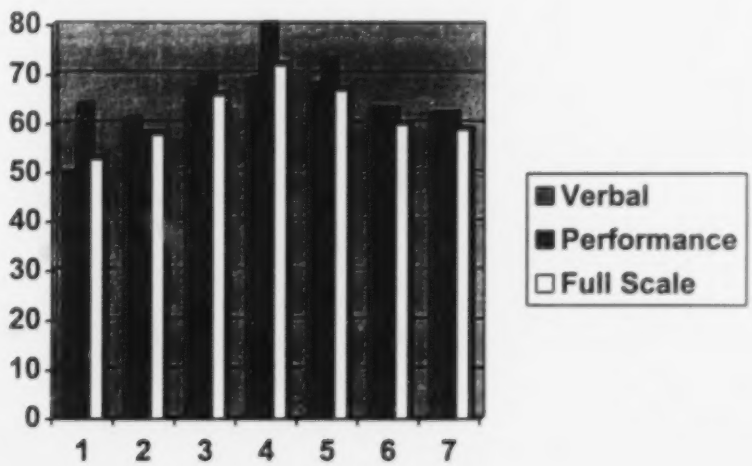
Site A:

Research at site A was conducted with seven students who are enrolled in the special education program for students with mental impairments. Their ages range from 14 to 20. They are permitted to remain in school until age 21. Some of the research students have already been in school more than the traditional four years.

Students at Site A are re-evaluated every three years using standardized methods. These tests are done to determine eligibility for services. After a student has met the eligibility criteria the student is enrolled in the Site A program for students who have mental impairments. The curriculum is based on life skills. Emphasis is placed on the adaptive skills that are essential to leading a productive life as an adult. Assessment tools to evaluate these adaptive skills are not currently available.

In order to show evidence of the problem at Site A, student's cumulative files were researched. Contents of the files varied greatly. There did not appear to be any standardized format for files. Individual Educational Plans were located in all files. The contents of these plans varied. Some students had mainly academic goals, others had behavior goals, and some had adaptive skill goals. The only common factor was that all subjects' files contained some reference to IQ scores. The scores were from various tests and some of them were very dated. The students IQ's are shown on Table 1.

Table 1

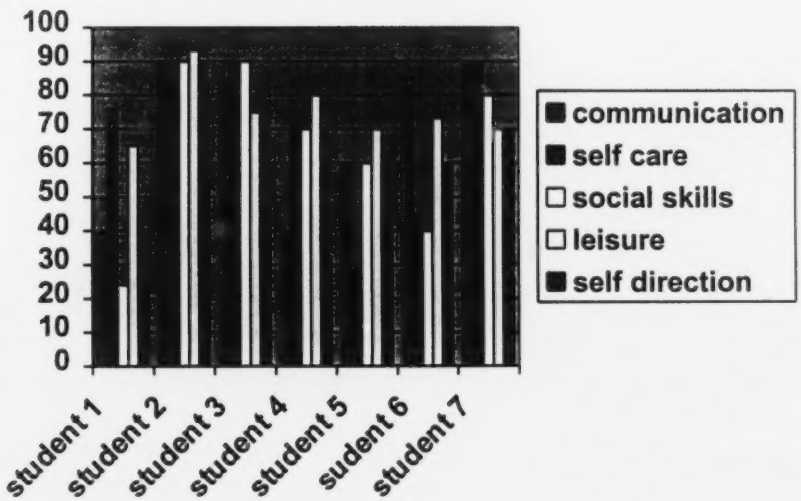


Students at site A show a range of IQ scores from 50 to 75. These scores systematically eliminate them from standardized testing of the core curriculum items. Results from the above table on IQ scores indicate nothing more than eligibility for services. However there were no reports of ongoing assessments of the adaptive skills that are part of the life skills curriculum.

To further show evidence of the problem a survey was developed on the ten adaptive skills essential for daily functioning as is included in the new definition by the American Association on Mental Retardation (Appendix A). Using a Likert scale, from one through five, one being the lowest and five being the highest, parents and staff were asked to rate how they perceive the student's development in these areas. Surveys were sent home the first week of school. Table 2 graphically shows the combined responses of staff, students, and parents on five of the adaptive skill areas. The Likert scale was weighted so the mean scores are based on 100 (Appendices B and C).

Table 2

Adaptive Skills



Results of the surveys on adaptive skills indicate that students scored lowest in the area of social skills and self-direction. There were no significant differences based on IQ scores.

To further refine evidence of the problem at Site A, participants were given a second survey that was specifically on social skills and pragmatics (Appendix D). This survey indicated that the area of most need was that of appropriate greetings for a situation and an awareness of interrupting. Tables 3 and 4 show the combined results of these surveys done by students, staff, and parents (Appendices E and F).

Table 3

Social Skills and Pragmatics

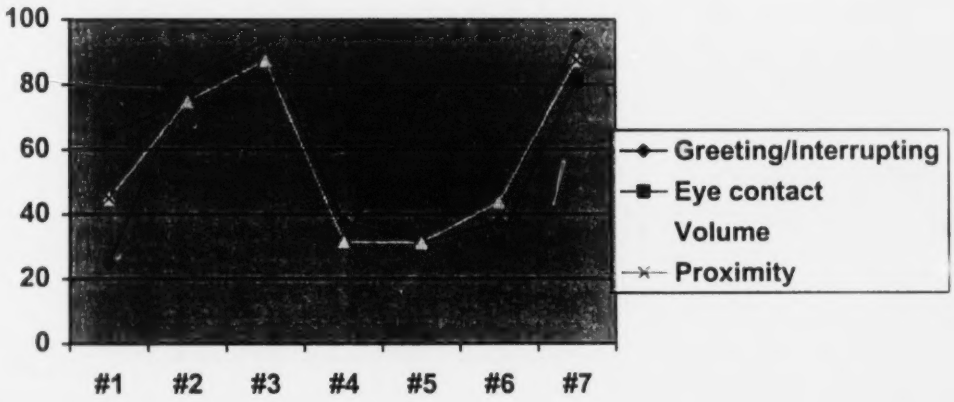
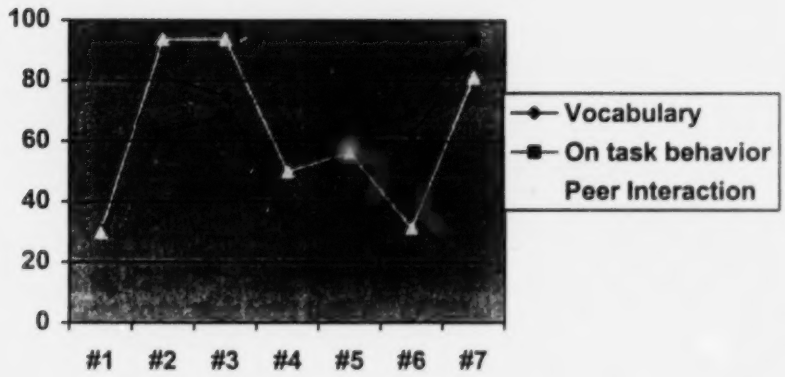


Table 4

Social Skills and Pragmatics



Student interviews were conducted to gain additional evidence of the problem (Appendix G). These interviews addressed the adaptive skills with an emphasis on social skills. Students also did a simple biographical poem (Appendix H). This was done to ascertain a self-reflective view of each student. Results of the poem indicate the uniqueness of each student. Their self-reflective views measure sensitivities and qualities that will be important factors as they prepare for the future. They all expressed different likes, dislikes, fears, and ambitions. The common thread in the interviews was that most of the students feel good about themselves. Only student # 5 expressed an attitude of general negativity. The value of the interviews became very apparent as students told important things about themselves. At this point it is necessary to emphasize that all research subjects have developed a trusting relationship with the researcher. A special rapport is necessary for this form of authentic assessment to have value. Information that cannot be found in files or on tests was revealed during the interviews.

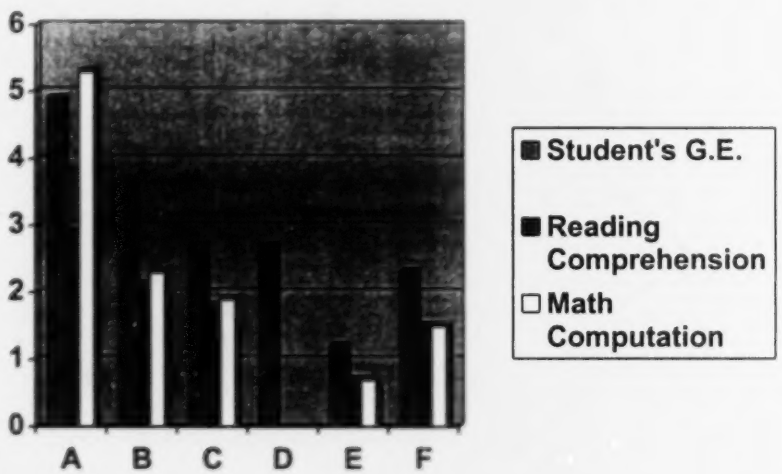
Examples of this are: Student # 4, a very quiet student in class, enjoys high adventure. He goes bungee jumping. Student # 2 lives in a home where he is exposed to drug traffic. Student # 5 baby-sits for disabled foster children. Student # 1 is afraid of getting lost. These interviews were taped so that their verbal communication skills could be heard.

Site B:

Site B consists of six hearing impaired students in a self-contained classroom. Their ages range from 8 to 11 years old in grades third through fifth. Their hearing losses vary from a mild/moderate loss through a severe/profound loss.

In order to show evidence of the problem at Site B, previous test scores were collected from students' records. Table 5 shows grade level reading comprehension and math computation scores.

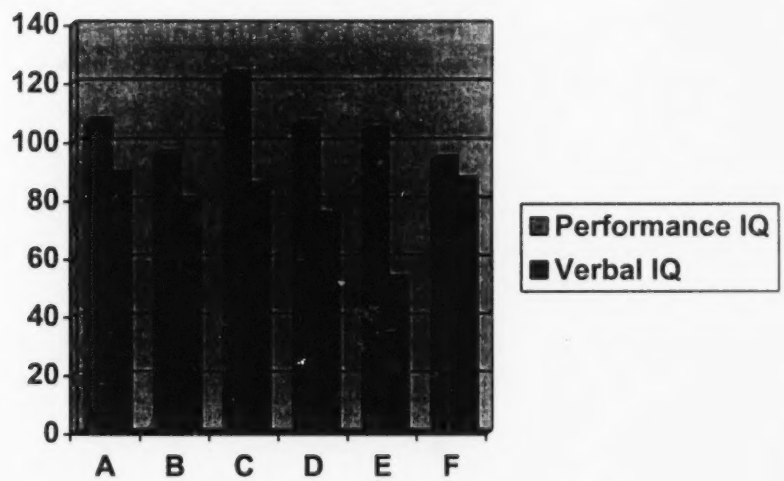
Table 5



Results from testing suggest that all students are functioning from 0.8 to 2.0 grade levels behind in reading and, similarly, 0.8 to 1.4 grade levels behind in math. However, when viewing anecdotal records, work samples and academic placement, students' abilities in reading vary from 1.0 years to 2.5 years below grade level and from 0 - 1.0 years behind in math. Student D was unable to be tested because of his inability to read directions and test items.

To further document evidence of the problem students' tests scores were also charted from previous psychologicals. These are shown on Table 6.

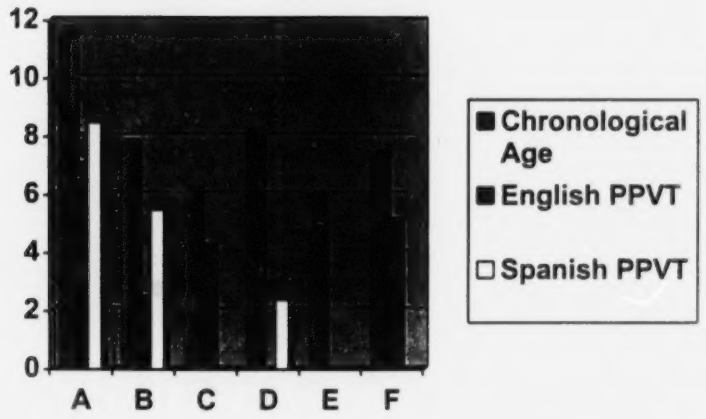
Table 6



These results show a marked difference in the students verbal and performance IQs. The range difference is from 7 points - 51 points with a mean score of 27 and median of 24.5. Their performance IQs show them to be average to high average in their cognitive abilities. The significant lack of verbal IQ may suggest that these hearing impaired students will do more poorly on tests that are linguistically involved.

Further data was collected about students' verbal abilities in the form of scores on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test. Results are graphed in Table 7.

Table 7



Student D was unable to take an English version of the test and Student E did not have any scores in his folder for this particular test. Students' vocabulary delays are from 2 years to 5 years, 4 months. It is interesting to note that 3 of the 6 students are of bilingual background. Tests given to them in Spanish also support a delay in their native language of 2 years, 3 months to 5 years, 10 months. This indicates that the students from Site B have large language delays, which can pose problems when trying to accurately assess their abilities using standard methods.

Additional study of the students' records show that they are systematically eliminated from the standardized testing done by the district. It is felt by the district that these students should not be involved in yearly testing unless they are mainstreamed into the regular education classroom for more than 50% of their day. None of the students in this study fit into this category. If the students did fit the criteria established by the district, special allowances would need to be made for the student's mode of communication. Guidelines in Individuals with Disabilities Entitlement Act (IDEA) stipulate that children with special needs have the right to be taught and tested using their mode of communication.

The students at Site B do have annual testing done by the teacher of the hearing impaired. The test that is administered is the Stanford Achievement Test, which has been designed and normed to be used with hearing impaired students. The test is administered using sign language for all oral directions. Test conditions may differ from other standardized testing situations because one to two students may be tested at a time as opposed to a large group of students. Other standardized tests are not normed for the hearing impaired population. Thus they are not appropriate assessment tools for this population.

To further support the evidence of the problem, the students at Site B were given a survey to see how they felt about testing (Appendix I). Of the six students half stated they liked taking tests and one-third liked taking tests sometimes. Half of the students said they study for a test and the other half said they sometimes study, yet only one-third felt they did better when they studied and the other two-thirds felt they sometimes did better. One-third of the students felt they were good at taking tests and half thought they were good sometimes. Even though the length of the test didn't seem to matter, most of the students felt good when they took tests. The two older students who were afraid of tests were the same students who have been exposed to

more testing and mainstreaming situations. Half of the students would like it if they didn't have to take a test and would rather do something else to show what they have learned (Appendix J).

Probable Causes within School Sites

1. Lack of appropriate test materials for our populations.
2. Students inability to take tests.
3. General lack of understanding of the special education students by the entire school population.
4. Tests are not normed for special education students.
5. Language deficits hinder accurate assessment on standardized tests.
6. Standard methods of administering tests are not appropriate for this population.

Probable Cause Literature Review

Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts.
–Albert Einstein

There is a common strand through current literature regarding assessment, which suggests that there is a definite movement toward a change in methodology. The change is occurring along with a change in the methods of learning. These changes are not easily found in the area of special education.

Tinsley (1993) feels most tests are paper and pencil tests of academic level only. Letter grades show progress and become the focus. Good grades are rewarded and teachers are tempted to teach the test in order to improve scores and grades. Students also get caught up in the grade game and are unable to self assess and internalize their own learning. "Evaluation

must focus on the individual progress of each student. The development of a positive self-concept must be a critical factor in evaluation practices" (p. 58).

Twigg (1994) states "We recognize that graduates need to have acquired skills, such as critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and effective communication, along with abilities, such as the ability to find needed information and the ability to work well with others" (para. 4). These are areas that our current methods of assessment fail to address particularly with students who have special needs. These acquired skills need to be assessed for all students.

Herman (1992) states that standardized tests have a negative impact on program quality. We find teachers teaching the test and focusing on basic skills instead of higher-order thinking strategies. "Superficial changes in instruction to improve test performance are not likely to result in meaningful learning" (p. 1084). The greatest problems are being found in the at-risk and disadvantaged schools. Most standards are decided by political and economic factors not by competency.

Detterman states that "the entire history of education of persons who are mentally retarded can be viewed as a pendulum that swings back and forth between competing social philosophies that are unsubstantiated by fact" (Detterman, 1997). Basic understanding of cognitive abilities is still a mystery to educators and as a result inappropriate methods of education and assessment are in existence for the special needs population.

Because of legislation PL94-142, PL101-476, PL101-336, and PL93-122 "inclusion of students with disabilities in testing has become an educational issue" (Gordon, Stump, and Glaser, 1996, p. 111). They feel that students with special needs are subject to problems with standardized tests. Such problems include a) poor reading ability, b) English deprivation, c) mode of communication, d) test reliability and validity, and e) cultural and experiential

differences. The ability to understand English is essential when taking standardized tests. "The majority of standardized tests use a high level of English vocabulary and complex language structures and are standardized for administration through spoken means, making them inappropriate for use with individuals who are deaf and who have limited English skills" (p. 112).

Cheek (1993) states that standardized testmakers are usually from white, suburban, middle class backgrounds. They assume cultural, social and cognitive approached that they deem best. They also assume too much about the test taker including their cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Braden (1992b) conducted a quantitative and qualitative research project on the intellectual assessment of deaf and hard of hearing people. He found that for deaf and hard of hearing people tests with higher verbal content yielded lower IQ scores than tests with low verbal content. Performance tests yielded higher IQ scores than verbal tests. Signed tests yielded higher IQ scores than spoken and written administered tests. Little difference in IQ appears when you use special norms. Braden found in his research that the Standford Achievement test was the only known test that is normed on the deaf population. Psychologists do not always know how to interpret test data on a hearing impaired child. They do not have access to literature on the hearing impaired and will not be familiar with research because of the low incidence of this disability. Appropriate testing is essential in order to determine educational services for deaf and hard of hearing students. Many times they are incorrectly diagnosed as mentally impaired. This happens because of their poor performance on verbal standardized tests. Both Gordon and Braden believe that hearing impaired students should have signed administration of their tests in order to fairly evaluate them.

Wiggins' (1998) vision states "The only way we can properly judge where we are is relative to where we want to be" (p. 1). He also states, "Student assessment should improve performance, not just monitor or audit it, and testing should be only a small facet of assessment" (Wiggins, 1993, p. xiv). He has established the following "Bill of Rights" that he feels all students are entitled to:

Assessment Bill of Rights

1. Worthwhile (engaging, educative, and "authentic") intellectual problems that are validated against worthy "real-world" intellectual problems, roles in situations.
2. Clear, apt, published, and consistently applied teacher criteria in grading work and published models of excellent work that exemplify standards.
3. Minimal secrecy in testing and grading.
4. Ample opportunities to produce work that they can be proud of (thus, ample opportunity in the curriculum and instruction to monitor, self assess and self-correct their work).
5. Assessment, not just test: multiple and varied opportunities to display and document their achievement, and options in tests that allow them to play to their strengths.
6. The freedom, climate, and oversight policies necessary to question grades and test practices without fear of retribution.
7. Forms of testing that allow timely opportunities for students to explain or justify answers marked as wrong but that they believe to be apt or correct.
8. Genuine feedback: usable information on their strengths and weaknesses and an accurate assessment of their long-term progress toward a set of exit-level standards framed in terms of essential tasks.

9. Scoring/grading policies that provide incentives and opportunities for improving performance and seeing progress against exit-level standards. (p. 28)

Literature suggests that since the beginning of education methods of teaching and testing have remained constant. Lectures combined with textbooks are used to have students learn material. Testing involves repeating in written form what has been presented. Originally education was for the wealthy and religious y privileged. Now education is considered to be a right for everyone. As a result of this broadening of the educational system the one method of teaching and testing does not work for all students.

In conclusion, it has been documented that student assessment needs to be improved in all sectors of education. The special needs population poses an additional challenge for educators.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

Many researchers feel that assessment reform is the foundation of school reform (Cizek, 1995). For this reform to take place a definite vision and a plan complete with implementation instructions has to be in place.

There is no easy solution to assessment of any student. Students with special needs just present more challenges to the educator. "Authentic assessment is a fairer, more informative way to measure success than standardized tests and exams have been, we need to address ways to adopt it without losing the potential for student empowerment" (Case, 1994, p.47).

Hebert (1992) writes about how her entire school district was frustrated with mandated standardized tests. The whole district decided to use alternative assessment exclusively and used portfolios as documentation of the students' growth. Their priority was the evaluation of the "whole child", their uniqueness, and their mode of learning.

"We must constantly remind ourselves that the ultimate purpose of evaluation is to have students become self-evaluating" (Costa & Kallick, 1992 p. 280). Assessment portfolios will allow special education educators to evaluate the intangible skills that are necessary for success as a life long learner (Bergen, 1993).

"Educators know how to design basic skills testing; how to use test data to rank, rather than improve schools and to sort, rather than educate children" (Wolf, 1992, p. 9). This sorting and lack of educating is most apparent with the students who have special needs. Portfolios allow students the opportunity to reflect upon their work.

According to Gillespie, Ford, Gillespie & Leavell (1996) there are many definitions of portfolios. Most definitions include portfolios as being a collection of a student's work over a period of time. The portfolio must be used by students and teachers as a means to assess students' learning. An important part of this evaluation process must be self-evaluation and reflection by the student. Gillespie, et. al. list many advantages to using portfolios as an evaluative tool: 1. They show growth through student's strengths and weaknesses over time. 2. They help students to see the connections in curriculum. 3. They help to establish peer interactions. 4. They help students to be more independent and responsible for their own learning. 5. They aid a student's self-awareness and self-esteem.

Portfolios are now being looked at as a tool to improve assessment. "Portfolios are a means to a end, not an end in themselves. The user must have a clear vision of what the 'end' is" (Arter, 1995, par. 15). Simply stated portfolios are a chronological collection of artifacts that show growth and change over a period of time.

Performance assessment is defined as "testing methods that require students to create an answer or product that demonstrates their knowledge or skills" (Elliott & Fuchs, 1997, p. 228). Portfolios are considered to be performance assessments. Special education teachers support performance assessment in the assessment of students with disabilities because of flexibility. However no available database is published (Elliott & Fuchs, 1997). Theories of performance assessment draw upon all the learning theories of Skinner, Bandura, Piaget, and Vygotsky (Bergen, 1993). Performance assessment is also

consistent with the constructivist theory (Elliott, 1997). Portfolios provide a holistic portrait of the student. It is a deliberate collection of accomplishments (Burke, 1994).

Gillispie et. al. (1996) also found advantages for teachers using portfolios. They felt teachers receive a truer picture of the student's overall growth with a portfolio. They also found portfolios helpful when making instructional decisions as they allow for the integration of instruction and assessment. Portfolios can be used with a variety of teaching methods, assessments and with students of different abilities. Portfolios are an aid when conferencing with parents, students, and teachers.

Kirk (1997) states that portfolios are flexible and can be adapted to your needs. They encourage individualized learning and can be used to document a student's achievement. She feels portfolios help students to work individually, take ownership in their work and make decisions about their learning. The student should do portfolios throughout the year to allow for ongoing self-evaluation. Selections should be made by the student to show "evidence of effort, progress, and achievement of all desired learning outcomes" (p. 33).

Portfolios are intended to be "ancillary to other indices of achievement" (ADPRIMA, par. 2). They provide information about the student for the purpose of making decisions relative to a student's competence (ADPRIMA).

Frazier and Paulson (1992) also believe portfolio assessment encourages self-assessment. It allows students to take control of their learning. They feel portfolio assessment should follow these guidelines: state a rationale for the portfolio, identify specific goals, set standards, select contents and evaluate results. They found the greatest benefit to portfolio assessment was the self-evaluation process. "It also encourages ownership, pride, and high self-esteem" (p.64).

Kieffer and Morrison (1994) state "schools should strive to create independent learners, rather than passive, dependent answer-oriented students" (p. 412). They feel portfolios can aid in this process

by helping to demonstrate growth over time. Portfolios can facilitate active, involved decision-making. They are an excellent tool for writing and literature-based reading programs. Portfolios can evolve over time; changes and adaptations can be made by the student or teacher to allow for growth and reflection. Kieffer and Morrison envision some of the following possibilities: "1. Portfolios serve as a way to communicate assessment information to parents, school officials and the public. 2. Portfolios document change – student and teacher. 3. Portfolios allow student ownership and responsibility. 4. Portfolio purposes vary according to the individual learner" (p. 417). This makes them a good tool for a special needs population who need to be evaluated according to their individual differences.

Tinsley (1993) agrees that the focus of evaluation should be on the individual learner. Students should not be compared to each other. We need to allow for the uniqueness of each student to be reflected. This develops a positive self-concept for students and is crucial to a good evaluation process. She states "evaluation must never be punitive or seen as an end in itself" (p. 53).

Travis (1996) says portfolios are a flexible tool to use for evaluation. They can be used to show work in progress or completed assignments. Portfolios can be used to show growth of the learner or as a measurement of achievement. "Portfolios enable educators to address individual student differences and place much control of the assessment procedure in the hands of the student" (p. 4).

Gillispie, et. al. (1996) also found some disadvantages to using portfolio assessment. This form of assessment is time consuming and can take away from instructional time. Portfolios can have too much teacher direction, thus not allowing for student input and choices. There is a problem with grading portfolios. This can lead to controversy, as grades are still the most commonly practiced and accepted way to assess students in schools. There is not a lot of information, training or support for teachers wishing to implement portfolio assessment in their classrooms. Teachers may start to view

portfolios as the only tool to use for assessment. There is controversy over the validity and reliability of portfolio assessment.

Wesson and King (1996) say that portfolios are an evaluation strategy that should be ongoing. Portfolios should be used throughout the year to monitor a student's progress. They aid students in self-reflection and assessment of their own learning. "The portfolio model of assessment structures the process for students to assume ownership of their learning, which promotes an internal locus of control" (p. 45). They have found potential problems with portfolio assessment. Some of these problems include: portfolio assessment is time consuming, evaluation of portfolios needs to have guidelines in order to be reliable and valid, the teacher's role of evaluator becomes that of facilitator, and special educators who choose to use portfolio assessment may encounter difficulty with the acceptance of this evaluation process by the general educators.

There is no standard design for portfolios. They may vary greatly. Assessment portfolios are usually more structured than instructional portfolios. Most of the evidence supporting portfolios comes from logical argument and anecdotes. "There exists very little "hard" evidence that demonstrates the impact of portfolios on students" (Arter, 1995, par. 4).

Review of the literature leads the researchers to conclude that education is experiencing major changes in assessment procedures. This reform movement appears to be all inclusive. However, even new standardized methods of assessment are not normed for students with special needs. Assessment of these students needs to be tailored to each individual. Our findings indicate that assessment portfolios appear to be the best method of assessment for students with special needs. The chronological collections of artifacts that portfolios contain allow student growth to be assessed over a longer period of time. Students with special needs often progress slowly. An assessment portfolio is an instrument that will indicate individual growth regardless of the timeframe. Despite the obstacles and time involvement

that has been mentioned, the researchers feel that using assessment portfolios with special needs students is well worth the effort.

Project Objectives and Processes

As a result of the use of authentic assessment tools, during the period of September 14, 1998 to December 18, 1998, the targeted high school students with mental impairments and the intermediate students with hearing impairments will show academic and social growth, as measured by teacher constructed authentic assessments and student assessment portfolios. In order to accomplish the project objective the following processes are necessary:

1. Establish baseline for each targeted student using student's records and surveys.
2. Develop materials necessary to implement authentic assessment.
3. Develop a framework and implementation method for assessment portfolios.
4. Monitor student progress through interviews, conferencing, videotaping, and checklists.

Project Action Plan

I. Start of school: August 25, 1998 to September 11, 1998

Gather baseline data on targeted students from:

- cumulative records
- student surveys
- teacher surveys
- staff surveys
- anecdotal records

II. September 14, 1998 to October 2, 1998

Introduce initial concepts of authentic assessment

- Start assessment portfolio process
  - Letter to parents (Appendix K)
  - Create Portfolio Center
  - Students will personalize portfolios
- Video tape students
- Introduce unit that will be assessed authentically
- Individual student conference (Appendix L)
- Student assessment of activities using self evaluation technique
- Design rubrics with student input (Appendix M)
- Teacher will begin observation logs (Appendix N)
- Students checklist will begin

III. October 4, 1998 to November 13, 1998

- Ongoing assessment
- Students will assess their own work using rubrics and checklists
- Selection and collection of artifacts for assessment portfolio (Teacher and student selections)
- Portfolio conferencing with students (Appendix O)
- Share portfolios with parents at conferences
- Ongoing use of logs, checklists, and conferencing
- Continued input from support staff

IV. November 16, 1998 to December 18, 1998

Complete Intervention

- Repeat surveys
- Teacher
- Staff
- Students
- Repeat video
- Final student interviews
- Final portfolio conferences
- Complete logs and checklists
- Invite parents to view final assessment portfolios
- Share portfolios with teaching team

Methods of Assessment

The methods that will be used to assess the effects of the assessment portfolios include the following:

1. Viewing the portfolios
2. Observation logs
3. Surveys
4. Conferencing notes
5. Interviews
6. Students self assessment rubrics
7. Anecdotal records indicating:
    - self esteem
    - growth
    - ownership
    - flexibility
    - self assessment
    - uniqueness

All of the above criteria are in rubric form for the purpose of assessing the effectiveness of the intervention (Appendix P).

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The project objective was to create a meaningful method of assessment for students with special needs. Site A research subjects consisted of seven high school students who have been identified as having mental impairments. At Site B the research subjects were six elementary students who have hearing impairments. The implementation of assessment portfolios and the use of authentic assessment tools were selected to achieve the stated objectives. Baseline data was collected at both sites.

Site A:

At Site A this data was assembled from cumulative records and surveys that were designed for use with this research. Students, teachers, and parents filled out two surveys. These surveys addressed adaptive skills, social skills and pragmatics. Authentic assessment tools were used to evaluate progress of the students in these areas. Focus was placed on the social skills that encompass appropriate greetings and acceptable methods of interruptions. This skill had a mean score of 59.75% on the initial surveys. This was the lowest score on the surveys.

The portfolio process began by sending letters to parents explaining the intent of the project. All of the students at Site A are enrolled in a vocational class. Assessment of skills that

are necessary components for success in the workplace was the primary focus. Parents responded by returning their surveys in a timely fashion. Three of the seven parents added encouraging comments to the surveys.

Original plans called for two meetings per week during which time specific social skills and communication skills were to be presented and practiced during role-play activities. Two weeks into the intervention it became necessary to change the schedule. Researcher A was unable to schedule the two full periods into her agenda. Other staff members did the second class period.

Another change that was made was the substitution of an audiotape for videotape. Each student was individually interviewed on tape. The tape along with a snapshot and a biographical poem was substituted for the videotape. The reason for this change was that the students' behavior changed as soon as the camera was turned on. The students' behavior did not change while being audiotaped.

The intervention began with the students learning a new vocabulary word; portfolio was a word that was foreign to most of the seven students. Their schema did not contain any prior knowledge of the concept of portfolios. Two students said they had heard the word but didn't know what it meant. A lesson was presented complete with samples of different types of portfolios. Pictures were also used in the lesson. Students used magazines and catalogues to find examples of portfolios. The students considered the word portfolio to be an adult word. Students with the assistance of the staff listed reasons for compiling a portfolio. These activities all took place in the vocational class. At this juncture students were highly motivated to begin compiling their own portfolios. The setting, a vocational class, was ideal for this process. This

strategy of connecting the compilation of the portfolio to jobs in the adult world was extremely effective. Students viewed their portfolio as a roadmap to success in the world of employment.

Materials were set up. Students had a pocket folder as their initial portfolio. A graduated step file was set up in a corner of the vocational office. All portfolios were kept in this location. Students were free to access this area when their schedules allowed time. They worked on their portfolios exclusively for one fifty-minute period per week. At this time common entries were worked on together. Artifacts were labeled and tagged. Students worked cooperatively during this time. They learned from each other and often accepted feedback and altered some of their original ideas. It was refreshing to watch them work without direct instruction. Staff circulated around the room during this period and was available for mini conferences. Appointments were made for interviews and for taping sessions. These conferences were done in the vocational office and often were connected to actual preparation for particular community job interviews.

Site B:

Researcher B gathered data from cumulative files, student work samples and student surveys. This data gave a beginning picture of the students as learners. Academic portfolios were implemented to show growth of students at Site B.

This process began with the children designing and decorating pizza boxes. These boxes served as storage of student's work through out the intervention. These stacked nicely in an established portfolio center in the classroom. Also at the center were materials needed for students to assemble artifacts for their portfolios such as stapler, scissors, three-hole punch and tags. Students had total access to this center at all times.

Students collected work samples throughout the week and stored them in their pizza boxes. On Friday, a "Portfolio Pride" time was established. This time was one hour in duration.

It allowed time for students to work with their collected artifacts and time for the researcher to conference with the students. The students began by sorting papers from the week by academic subject area. Then they were to choose one artifact from each area to include in their portfolio. A tag was stapled to each selection, which provided a reflection of why the student had chosen that particular artifact. These papers were then dated and stored in three-ring binders, which had eight section dividers in them. In the beginning weeks, students spent time organizing, labeling and decorating their binders.

Portfolio Pride time was utilized by Researcher B to conference with half the students on alternating weeks. A conference sheet was included in the back of each student's portfolio. Conferencing time was dedicated to reviewing artifact choices, the reflection process, using tags on artifacts and individual goals (Appendix Q).

Parental involvement began with letters explaining the portfolio process being sent home the first week of school. The students and Researcher B shared portfolios with parents at conferences, nine weeks into the year. Portfolios were sent home for parents to view at the end of the project. Parents were asked to share two stars and a wish for their children in their portfolios (Appendix R). Next to each star the parents were asked to indicate a quality or an achievement of their child that bolstered parental pride. The parents were also asked to name a goal or "wish" they had for their child this year. These were returned and discussed between the student and researcher.

Authentic assessments were implemented in language, literature, and science curriculums. These would serve as base-line data to be compared with other similar assessments at the end of the intervention. All portions of students' projects including rubrics were added to the portfolio and tagged as "Teacher's Choice". Other base-line data was gathered the first few

weeks of school in the form of student work samples from other subject areas and writing samples.

A survey was done during the first week of school regarding how the students felt about test taking. This was done to reveal any impact authentic assessment would have on the students.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

Site A:

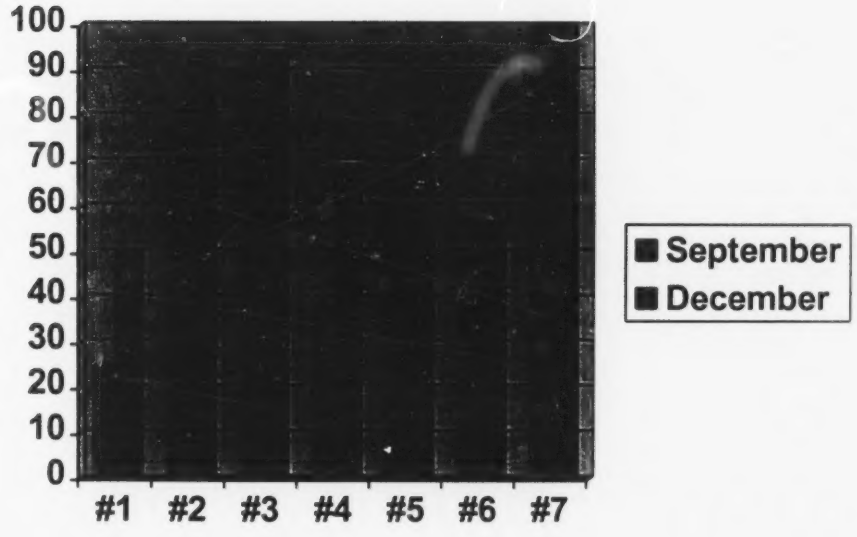
In order to assess the effects of the intervention we must first look at the product. Each student now has a personal portfolio. The student has solely created it. The unique cover gives us a glimpse at the creative side of an individual. The photo lets us see physical attributes as well as letting us see grooming on a typical day in school. The biographical poem allows the reader the opportunity to peek into the life of the student, learn about what is valued, how he feels, and what some of his dreams and fears are. The audiotape provides us with an auditory reference of the students' ability to communicate verbally. Intelligibility, articulation, fluency and ability to answer simple and complex questions are apparent to the listener. Basic ability to communicate is shown very graphically in the above mentioned parts of the portfolio.

Other entries in the portfolio include samples of academic work and artifacts from the personal lives of the students outside of the school environment. Students were allowed to bring entries from home. A completed job application and fact sheet that indicates the student's ability to apply for employment was a mandatory artifact.

Surveys on adaptive skills and social skills were repeated at the end of the period of research. The total results from all of the surveys did not vary to any statistically significant degree. There was notable growth in only one area. These results are shown in the following bar graph (Appendices B and C).

Post Intervention Results

Social Skill Used in Greeting /Interrupting



During the twelve-week intervention the major content area was in the development of specific social skills that are used in greetings and interrupting. All team members focused on assisting students with the acquisition of these social skills. Taking into consideration the short time frame coupled with students who have cognitive disabilities large gains were not anticipated. I am extremely pleased with the amount of growth that was shown in this content area. Skills that require judgement are often very difficult for these students.

Site B:

Students at Site B also have created a personal portfolio. It gives a picture of the student as a learner. It shows progress and growth of their academic work throughout the intervention. It gives the students tangible evidence that they are improving in school. They are able to see their growth in any chosen subject simply by looking at artifacts from the beginning to the end of the intervention. More importantly the portfolio has allowed the students to take ownership of their learning. They are indeed proud of their accomplishments and are very willing to show their portfolios to anyone willing to view them. This process has increased their self-esteem as they take pride in their accomplishments.

Surveys that were given to see how students felt about testing were repeated. They showed an increased understanding that taking tests might not be all that bad. Students were less afraid about tests than in the beginning of the research. Students also didn't mind having to take tests as long as they were short. What really impressed Researcher B was the fact that students gained an understanding that they didn't have to have a "test" to show what they have learned. They have been shown through the intervention's use of authentic assessment that there are many other ways to show what you have learned. In the initial survey half of the six students didn't want to take tests and would rather do something else. The second survey indicated that five of the six students would like not having to take tests and four of the six would now rather do something different to show what they have learned (Appendix S)..

Conclusions and Recommendations

Site A:

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data the following conclusions can be drawn. The portfolio intervention provides a tangible method of assessing the adaptive skills that are necessary for daily living. Information about the students functioning levels is all concisely

organized. There was little change in the survey results as was anticipated with this population. What was achieved was a focus on the adaptive skills and their importance in the assessment process. When dealing with young adults with documented cognitive deficits significant changes were not anticipated during the twelve weeks of the research. What was achieved was that students, parents, and staff all became much more aware of the importance of the targeted adaptive skills and their importance in the adult transition that these students are embarking upon. Self-esteem in the students was raised. Students took ownership and pride in their portfolios.

Pre-planning is the key to success with assessment portfolios. A careful outline of procedures and a letter to parents is necessary before surveys of any kind are sent home. Too much information will make the process cumbersome and it will lose its effectiveness. I found that my initial surveys were too lengthy to be useful. I narrowed down the adaptive skills that were targeted from ten to five. It is easy to become too ambitious with an action that is so open ended as the assessment portfolio. Quality is key not quantity. When I reflect over my twenty plus years of educating students who have cognitive disabilities I can honestly say that the assessment portfolio has the potential to be the most important part of the students' records. It conveys so much more information than the traditional files. It is not to be viewed as a replacement for the students' files, but as an additional valuable collection of information.

Site B:

I feel portfolios are an essential part of showing academic growth. Long gone are the days of percentage grading with students. Students with special needs particularly require a new method to help them see their growth. Portfolios do just that.

I found during the intervention that conferencing with students was necessary to monitor their understanding of the process. The students at Site B need self-esteem building; this cannot be accomplished on their own. Observations and comments made during portfolio conferences regarding their progress aided these students in their development of self-esteem. Conferencing with three students per week was easy for me. If my class were larger, I am not sure I would have been able to procure this important aspect of the portfolio intervention and done justice to each child.

The students' portfolios not only show academic growth, but each portfolio has a unique quality that has aided the student to truly call them their own. Each child has taken ownership and pride in their work. Even though they are not self-reflecting as deeply as I would have liked, the students have obtained a good basic understanding of "the process" and I can continue to build on this base. Because of our unique situation in special education of having the same students for three and four years, I will have the opportunity to continue this process and hopefully develop it further with these students.

Recommendations to other teachers: portfolios are best kept over a long period of time. Ideally they would follow the student as he or she traverses his school career. The contents of the portfolios need to be reviewed often. Assessment portfolios are very time consuming. At the initial stages they can be all consuming. Their value to students who have special needs, however, cannot be understated. An assessment portfolio is not just a collection of everything. It is a collection of meaningful entries. We view the portfolios as vignettes of the student.

Recommendations to other researchers: research involving special needs students would be best done over a longer period of time. Twelve weeks was too short in duration to obtain statistically significant results. Surveys should be constructed to address only the areas of focus.

Lengthy surveys become burdensome. Authentic assessments were a valuable part of our research and are an area that could be expanded upon by other researchers.

In conclusion both researchers have found that portfolios provide an excellent way to furnish additional assessment that can be used for evaluating special needs students. This research project has shown that portfolios are of value to both students and teachers. This population does not show growth at normal rates, but even this twelve-week period has shown growth to the students in ways we cannot evaluate with standardized tests. The look in a student's eyes when he proudly shows his accomplishments in his portfolio says it all. They have grown academically, emotionally, socially, and in their self-esteem. These all are steps on the road to becoming life long learners. These researchers believe that portfolios provide the missing link in the assessment process.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A
Survey on Adaptive Skills

Student's Name:_____
Date:_____
Form completed by:_____**Relationship**_____

Adaptive Skills Essential For Daily Functioning
Directions:
Put a check on the scale indicating where this student is functioning.
(1 is low and 5 is high on the scale.)

1. Communication	1	2	3	4	5
2. Self-care	1	2	3	4	5
3. Home living	1	2	3	4	5
4. Social skills	1	2	3	4	5
5. Leisure	1	2	3	4	5
6. Health & safety	1	2	3	4	5
7. Self-direction	1	2	3	4	5
8. Functional Academics	1	2	3	4	5
9. Community Use	1	2	3	4	5
10. Work	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix B
Tally Sheet on Adaptive Skills Survey
September = / December = +

Skills	Student	1	2	3	4	5
Communication	1	//	// ++++		/ +	
	2				// ++	// ++
	3			/	/ ++	// ++
	4	//	/ +	++	/ +	
	5	/	/ +	+	/ +	/ +
	6		+	/ +	/ +	// +
	7				// +++	// +
		1	2	3	4	5
Self-Care	1			/ +	//// +++	+
	2		// +	/ +	+	/ +
	3			/ +		/// + ++
	4		/ +		/// +++	
	5	// ++	// ++			
	6	/ +	// ++		/ +	
	7				// +	// +++
		1	2	3	4	5
Social Skills	1	/// +	/ ++++			
	2				// ++	// ++
	3				// ++	// ++
	4	//	/ ++	/ +	+	
	5	/	/ ++	// +	+	
	6	// ++	/ +		/ +	
	7			/ +	// ++	/ +
		1	2	3	4	5
Leisure	1	/ +	/ +			// ++
	2				/ +	// ++
	3			// ++	/ +	/ +
	4			/ +	/ +	/ +
	5		/ +	/ +	/ +	/ +
	6		/ +	+	/ +	/
	7			//	// +++	
		1	2	3	4	5
Self Direction	1	/// ++++		/ +		
	2		/ +	// ++		/ +
	3		//// ++++			
	4	/	// ++	/ ++		
	5	// ++	/ +		/ +	
	6	/ ++	+	// +		/
	7			/	/ +	// +++

Appendix C
Adaptive Skills Survey Results (mean scores)

Skills	Student	Mean (Sept)	Mean (Dec.)
Communication	1	40	48
	2	90	90
	3	85	90
	4	40	60
	5	60	70
	6	85	70
	7	90	85
Self-Care	1	76	80
	2	85	70
	3	90	90
	4	70	70
	5	30	30
	6	45	45
	7	90	95
Social Skills	1	24	36
	2	90	90
	3	90	90
	4	35	55
	5	60	55
	6	40	40
	7	80	80
Leisure	1	65	65
	2	90	90
	3	75	75
	4	80	80
	5	70	70
	6	73.2	60
	7	70	80
Self Direction	1	24	28
	2	55	55
	3	40	40
	4	40	50
	5	40	40
	6	60	35
	7	85	95

Appendix D

Social Skills and Pragmatics Survey
(for staff, students, and parents)

Date:_____
Student:_____ **Class**_____
Survey completed by:_____ **Position**_____

Criteria	1 Beginner	2 Novice	3 Apprentice	4 Expert
1. Greeting Appropriate for situation Aware of interrupting	1	2	3	4
2 Eye Contact Demonstrates eye contact without staring	1	2	3	4
3. Volume Appropriate volume for the situation	1	2	3	4
4.Proximity Stands an arms length away from subject	1	2	3	4
5. Vocabulary Differentiates between formal and casual speech	1	2	3	4
6. On Task Behavior Stays focussed	1	2	3	4
7. Peer Interaction Appropriate verbal and physical interaction	1	2	3	4

Comments:

Appendix E
Tally Sheet on Social Skills And Pragmatics Survey
September = / December = +

Skills	Student	1	2	3	4
Greeting and Interrupting	1	/////	++++++		
	2		/	/ +	// +++
	3			/ +	/// +++
	4	//	// +	+++	
	5	//	/ +	/ ++	+
	6	// +	// +	++	
	7				//// ++++
		1	2	3	4
Eye contact	1		/// +++	/ +	/ +
	2		/ +	// +	/ ++
	3		/ +		/// +++
	4	//	/ +++	/ +	
	5		/ +	// +	/ ++
	6	// +	/ +++	/	
	7		/ +	/ +	// ++
		1	2	3	4
Volume	1	/// ++	/ ++		/ +
	2		/	/ ++	// ++
	3			// ++	// ++
	4	// +	/ ++	/ +	
	5	// ++	/ +	/ +	
	6	/// ++	+		/ +
	7		.	// ++	// ++
		1	2	3	4
Proximity	1	// ++	// +	/ ++	
	2			// ++	// ++
	3		/ +	/ ++	// +
	4			/// . +++	+
	5		// +	+	// ++
	6	/	/ ++	/ +	/ +
	7			// +	// +++

Appendix E
Tally Sheet on Social Skills And Pragmatics Survey
September = / December = +

Skills	Student	1	2	3	4
Vocabulary	1	//// ++++			/ +
	2			/// +++	/ +
	3		/ +	// ++	/ +
	4	/ +	/// +++		
	5	/ +	/ +	/ +	/ +
	6	/ +	/ +	/ +	/ +
	7			// +	// ++
		1	2	3	4
On task behavior	1	//// +++	/ ++		
	2	/ +	/ +	/ +	/ +
	3		/ +	// ++	/ +
	4		/ +	/ ++	// +
	5	/ +		/// +++	
	6	/ +	+++	//	/
	7			/	/// ++++
		1	2	3	4
Peer Interaction	1	//// +	/ ++++		
	2			/ +	/// +++
	3			/ +	/// +++
	4	//	/ +++		/ +
	5		/// ++	/ ++	
	6	/ +	/ ++	/ +	
	7			/// +++	/ +

Appendix F
Social Skills And Pragmatics Survey Results (mean scores)

Skills	Student		Mean (Sept)	Mean (Dec)	
Greeting and Interrupting	1		25	50	
	2		81.25	93.75	
	3		93.75	93.75	
	4		37.5	68.75	
	5		75	81.25	
	6		37.5	56.25	
	7		100	100	
Eye contact	1		65	65	
	2		75	81.25	
	3		87.5	87.5	
	4		31.25	56.25	
	5		75	81.25	
	6		31.25	31.25	
	7		81.25	81.25	
Volume	1		45	40	
	2		75	87.5	
	3		87.5	87.5	
	4		31.25	50	
	5		31.25	31.25	
	6		43.75	50	
	7		87.5	87.5	
Proximity	1		45	50	
	2		87.5	87.5	
	3		81.25	81.25	
	4		75	81.25	
	5		75	81.25	
	6		62.5	68.75	
	7		87.5	93.75	

Appendix F
Social Skills And Pragmatics Survey Results (mean scores)

Skills	Student		Mean (Sept)	Mean (Dec)	
Vocabulary	1		45	45	
	2		81.25	81.25	
	3		75	75	
	4		31.25	31.25	
	5		62.5	62.5	
	6		62.5	62.5	
	7		87.5	93.75	
On task behavior	1		30	35	
	2		62.5	62.5	
	3		68.75	75	
	4		81.25	81.25	
	5		62.5	62.5	
	6		68.75	43.75	
	7		93.75	100	
Peer Interaction	1		30	45	
	2		93.75	93.75	
	3		93.75	93.75	
	4		50	62.5	
	5		56.25	62.5	
	6		31.25	50	
	7		81.25	81.25	

Appendix G
Student Interview Questions
Used with tape recorder.

1. Please tell me about yourself.
2. What is your name?
3. What is your address?
4. What is your phone number?
5. Can you tell me your social security number?
6. Please tell me about your job. If you don't have a job what responsibilities do you have at home?
7. Please finish the following sentences:
   - I like.....
   - I do not like.....
   - When I am an adult I want to have a job as a.....
   - I am afraid of.....
   - Before I can graduate from high school I need to learn.....
8. If you could have three wishes what would you wish for?
9. If you could change anything about yourself what changes would you make?
10. Is there anything else that you would like to talk about?

Appendix H
Biographical Poem

About Me

Name
(3 words that tell about you)

1._____

2._____

3._____

Relative of: (brother, sister, son, daughter)

_____

Lover of:
1._____

2._____

Who Needs:
1._____

2._____

Who is afraid of:
1._____

2._____

Who would like to see:
1._____

2._____

Who gives:
1._____

2._____

Who would like to have a job as a:

_____

Name:_____ Date:_____

Tests

Please circle your answer.

1. Do you like taking tests?	Yes	No	Sometimes
2. Do you study for a test?	Yes	No	Sometimes
3. Do you do better when you study?	Yes	No	Sometimes
4. Are you good at taking tests?	Yes	No	Sometimes
5. If you could do something else to show what you've learned instead of taking a test would you do that?	Yes	No	Sometimes
6. Would you like it if you didn't have to take a test?	Yes	No	Doesn't matter
7. Do you like long or short tests?	Short	Long	Doesn't matter
8. How do you feel when you have to take a test?	Good	OK	Scared

Name:_____ Date:_____

Tests

Please circle your answer.

1. Do you like taking tests?	/// Yes	/ No	// Sometimes
2. Do you study for a test?	/// Yes	No	/// Sometimes
3. Do you do better when you study?	// Yes	No	//// Sometimes
4. Are you good at taking tests?	// Yes	/ No	/// Sometimes
5. If you could do something else to show what you've learned instead of taking a test would you do that?	/// Yes	/ No	// Sometimes
6. Would you like it if you didn't have to take a test?	/// Yes	/ No	// Doesn't matter
7. Do you like long or short tests?	/ Short	/ Long	//// Doesn't matter
8. How do you feel when you have to take a test?	//// Good	OK	// Scared

Appendix K
Site A Parent Letter

September 1, 1998

Dear Parents,
Getting students prepared for the world of work is a large task. In order to evaluate each student's level of readiness we are going to begin using portfolios. Simply stated this will be a carefully selected collection of data about your student. I am very excited about this addition to the vocational program. Portfolios have been used for years in various professions and now they are emerging as an excellent tool to use in education. This is a wonderful way to show growth of the students and it will also be useful to use with employers as students begin the job development portion of the program.

Data to be included in the portfolio will be selected by teachers, students, and parents. We will use various forms of artifacts. Some entries will be paper and pencil items, such as job applications, resumes, work histories, fact sheets, class work, check lists etc. Videotapes, cassette tapes, photos, graphics, and other materials can also be included. There are no limits to the possibilities of various forms of data that can be used.

The portfolio is designed to give the students a visual tool to see their own growth and be helpful to them as they set their goals. This collection will be used at conferences and planning meetings. It is an efficient way of painting a portrait of each student's unique abilities. Certain entries from the portfolio will be used during the interview process for community placement.

The portfolios will be cumulative. We will keep them at school and continually update them with new entries. They are designed to be an aid to assist the students as they work on job readiness.

I will keep you informed as this process develops. If you have any questions please call. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Ann Klonicke
Special Education Vocational Coordinator

Appendix K
Site B Parent Letter

Dear Parents,

This year we will be working on a new project called "portfolios". A portfolio is a collection of a student's work over the year. It is a new assessment tool used in education to show a student's growth throughout the year. A portfolio gives the student the opportunity to self-evaluate their work, reflect on their accomplishments, and to set future goals for themselves. This system helps to promote student ownership in their own learning.

Students will collect their work throughout each week. Every Friday we will have "Portfolio Pride" time in the classroom. During that time the students will review their work for that week and make selections of things to be kept in their portfolio. Each chosen artifact will be clearly marked with a "tag" explaining why they have chosen that particular piece. Each child will have a three-ring binder to store their items in which will be decorated and organized by the student. These will be stored in the classroom. Pieces will also be chosen by the teacher and marked as such. Students and parents may want to include work or outside activities that they are especially proud of in a section of the portfolio. These could be things from church, scouts, park district, sports, etc.

Also bi-weekly during Portfolio Pride time the teacher and the student will have a conference about their portfolio to assure the process is working for each child and to answer any questions either may have.

Parents will have the opportunity to view the portfolios three times during the year. The first will be at parent/teacher conferences which are held the first week of November. The student will be included in this conference to show and explain their portfolio to you. The second viewing will be in February. The portfolio will be sent home and you will have a parent/student conference about it. The students will be prepared to share their work with you and there will be a feedback form for you to fill out before you return the portfolio to school. Finally, we will have a "Portfolio Pride" exhibition in May. At that time parents may come to school and view portfolios from the entire class.

I hope this new project will enhance your child's growth and learning at school. I am very excited about it and I feel the children will be too. If you have any questions at anytime, as always, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Jensen

Appendix L
Conference Log

Name:_____ Date:_____

Date	Topic	Student Comments	Teacher Comments

Appendix M
Site A Portfolio Rubric

Portfolio Rubric

	1	2	3	4
Criteria	**Beginner Just getting started**	**Novice Needs Practice**	**Apprentice Getting Close**	**Expert You did it!!!**
Organization of Contents	Needs to get organized	Missing some Required entries	All entries completed, good organization	All entries included neatly and additional ones added
Table of contents	Incomplete	Meets minimum requirements	All entries listed on table of contents.	Added details to complete table of contents
Personal Data	Missing most of the data	Missing some information up to three items	Complete data hand written	Complete, good paper, Computer Generated
Resume	Incomplete information	Missing some information up to three items	Complete data hand written	Well written, complete, computer generated
Work History	Incomplete information	Meets minimum requirements	Lists all work experiences with dates, hand written	Lists all work experiences with dates, computer generated
Bio-Poem	Incomplete information	Missing some information up to three items	Complete, some reflection	Reflective of student's feelings
Photo & Frame	Incomplete	Missing parts of project up to three items	Complete, some creativity	Creative, complete and reflective
Taped interview	Incomplete	Missing responses Up to three topics	Complete responses to topics	Honest, complete and reflective
Academic work Samples	Incomplete	Meets minimum requirements	Complete, some creativity	Best work from all content areas
Artifact from home	Incomplete	Meets minimum requirements	Complete	Complete, shows reflection in selection of artifacts
Goal Statement	Incomplete	Meets minimum requirements	Complete and realistic planning	Show reflection creativity, honesty, & is realistic
Reflection	Incomplete	Meets minimum requirements	Reflections provide insight into student's feelings	Reflections show evidence of insight and thoughtfulness

Appendix M
Site B Portfolio Rubric

Portfolio Rubric

	1	2	3	4
Criteria	**Beginner Just getting started**	**Novice Needs Practice**	**Apprentice Getting Close**	**Expert You did it!!!**
Organization of Contents	Needs to get organized	Missing some Required entries	All entries completed, good organization	All entries included neatly and additional ones added
Creative Cover	Incomplete	Meets minimum requirements	Meets all requirements	Showed special effort and creativity
Dividers	Incomplete information	Meets minimum requirements	Meets all requirements	Shows special effort and creativity
Use of Tags	Incomplete information	Missing some information	Complete, some reflection	Reflective of student's feelings
Projects/ Rubrics	Incomplete	Missing parts of project up to three items	Complete, some creativity	Creative, complete and reflective
Academic work Samples	Incomplete	Meets minimum requirements	Complete, some creativity	Best work from all content areas
Artifact from home	Incomplete	Meets minimum requirements	Complete	Complete, shows reflection in selection of artifacts
Goal Statement	Incomplete	Meets minimum requirements	Complete and realistic planning	Show reflection creativity, honesty, & is realistic
Reflection	Incomplete	Meets minimum requirements	Reflections provide insight into student's feelings	Reflections show evidence of insight and thoughtfulness

Appendix N
Site B Observation Log

Observer: _____ **Date:** _____

Student Name: _____

Observation Log

Date	Observed Behavior	Comments

Appendix O
Site B Conference Sheet

Student Name: _____ Reviewer's Name:_____

Portfolio Conference Sheet

Date	Artifacts Reviewed	Comments/Suggestions

Appendix P
Site A and Site B
Intervention Rubric

Assessment Portfolio Rubric

Criteria	Beginner Just Getting Started	Novice Needs Practice	Apprentice Getting Close	Expert You Did IT!!!
Academic Growth	No clear evidence of targeted skills. Little linkage to academic expectations.	Student work indicates some progress on targeted skills. Entries are inconsistent.	Student work indicates progress on targeted skills. Most entries indicate effort.	Student work indicates progress on targeted skills. Evidence of complete effort.
Social Growth	No clear evidence of targeted skills. Little linkage to transfer across domains.	Student work indicates progress on targeted skills. Transfer of skills across domains is inconsistent.	Student work indicates progress on targeted skills. Some transfer of skills across domains.	Student work indicates progress on targeted skills. Evidence of transfer of skills across domains.
Ownership	No clear evidence of ownership of skills. Little linkage to performance across domains	Student work indicates ownership of targeted skills. Performance across domains is inconsistent.	Student work indicates ownership of targeted skills. Some performance across domains.	Student work indicates ownership of targeted skills. Performance occurs across domains
Self Assessment	No clear evidence of reflective, honest, realistic insight in assessing own performance	Student is inconsistent in assessing performance.	Student shows some reflective, honest, realistic insight in assessing own performance.	Student shows complete, reflective, honest, realistic insight in assessing own performance.
Uniqueness	No clear evidence of understanding of special needs.	Student shows inconsistent understanding of individual special needs.	Student shows some understanding of individual special needs.	Student shows understanding of individual special needs.

Appendix Q
Site B Goal Sheet

My Goals!

1.

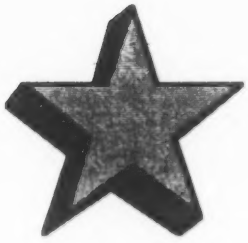
2.

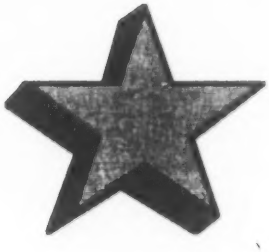
3.

4.

Appendix R
Site B Two Stars and a Wish

Two Stars and a Wish!





Wish!

Name:_____ Date:_____

Tests

Please circle your answer.

1. Do you like taking tests?	/// Yes	/ No	// Sometimes
2. Do you study for a test?	//// Yes	No	// Sometimes
3. Do you do better when you study?	/// Yes	No	/// Sometimes
4. Are you good at taking tests?	// Yes	/ No	/// Sometimes
5. If you could do something else to show what you've learned instead of taking a test would you do that?	//// Yes	/ No	/ Sometimes
6. Would you like it if you didn't have to take a test?	~~////~~ Yes	No	/ Doesn't matter
7. Do you like long or short tests?	//// Short	Long	// Doesn't matter
8. How do you feel when you have to take a test?	~~////~~ Good	/ OK	Scared

Appendix S
Test Survey-Post Tally Sheet

69